

Serial No. 09/050,614
Amendment A

comprising the steps of

attaching a carrier to [hold] shape the blood processing container outside the arcuate centrifugation channel in a [geometry generally] rounded, flexed condition conforming to [the shape of] the arcuate centrifugation channel, the carrier serving to resist deformation of the processing container [from the geometry],

inserting the blood processing [channel] container into the arcuate centrifugation [chamber] channel while [held in the geometry] shaped by the carrier, and

performing a blood processing procedure by conveying blood into the blood processing channel for flow in a circumferential path within the arcuate centrifugation channel while the arcuate centrifugation channel is rotated about a rotational axis.

REMARKS

Figs. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the drawings have been amended to address the informalities noted by the Examiner. The Specification has also been amended in view of the amendment to Figs. 1 and 2, as well as to correct typographical errors noted by the Examiner.

Claims 1, 2, 16, 19, 22, and 23 have been amended. Claims 3 and 21 have been canceled.

Claims 1, 2, 4 to 20, 22, and 23 remain in the application. Claims 1, 2, and 19 are independent assembly claims, and claims 22 and 23 are independent method claims.

Reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested in light of these amendments and the remarks that follow.

Claims 7 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 for various reasons. In response, the disclosure of a carrier made from a thermally formed material (as defined in originally filed claim 7) has been placed in the Specification, thereby providing support for claim 7. Claim 16 has been amended to define a normally lay flat configuration for the processing chamber when not secured to the carrier. The rejections based upon Section 112 are believed to have been overcome.

The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) based upon Alterbaum (US 4,714,457), Schoendorfer (US 4,445,883), or Mitchell et al (US 3,674,197).

All independent claims have been amended to define an elongated processing container, which is inserted into and removal from an arcuate channel defined between inner and outer walls, so that fluids can be conveyed in a circumferential path about the rotation axis for separation in a centrifugal field. As defined in the amended claims, a carrier is secured to the processing container to shape the processing container outside the arcuate channel in a rounded, flexed

Serial No. 09/050,614
Amendment A

condition conforming to the arcuate channel. The carrier limits deformation of the processing container during insertion into or removal from the arcuate channel.

Neither Alterbaum, Schoendorfer, or Mitchell are concerned with solving the fundamental problem the amended claims address; namely, shaping an elongated flexible container in a rounded, flexed condition so that it can be reliably loaded into an arcuate flow channel to convey fluid in a circumferential path about a rotational axis during centrifugal processing. Alterbaum, Schoendorfer, and Mitchell have nothing to teach or suggest regarding the problem or the solution, because Alterbaum, Schoendorfer, and Mitchell place bags that are not elongated into cylindrical buckets or openings, to direct fluid in an axially path along the axis of rotation during centrifugal processing. There is nothing in Alterbaum, Schoendorfer, or Mitchell to teach or suggest shaping an elongated processing container into a rounded flexed condition by securement to a carrier, for insertion or removal as a unit into an arcuate separation channel, to convey fluid in a circumferential path about a rotational axis. In Alterbaum, Schoendorfer, and Mitchell, the processing container is not elongated, it is not placed into an arcuate channel, and it does not carry fluids in a circumferential path about a rotational axis.

For these reasons, applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the pending rejection of the claims.

Allowance of claims 1, 2, 4 to 20, 22, and 23 is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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